

- (5) list contact information to help interested parties access information on a regular basis.

This guidance should be accessible, and made available through the websites of Federal agencies, as well as in printed form.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: This memorandum was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 16 but was embargoed for release until 10:06 a.m. on June 17. An original was not available for verification of the content of this memorandum.

The President's Radio Address

June 17, 2000

Good morning. Tomorrow America pauses to honor the countless contributions and obligations of fatherhood. When I think back on all the titles I've held, from attorney general of Arkansas to Governor to President, none of them comes close in importance and in fulfillment to the simple title of father.

Fatherhood is one of the great blessings of life and also one of the greatest challenges any man can have, especially at a time when it's becoming more and more difficult to balance the pressures of work and family.

Today I want to share some evidence with you about the critical role fathers play in their children's lives, and I want to talk about our obligation as a nation to help more fathers provide both the emotional and the financial support their children need.

We've known for a long time now that students do better in school and later in life when their parents are more actively involved in their learning. But over the years, parent involvement often has meant mothers' involvement. This assumption misses the importance of fathers. Research now confirms that involvement of both parents in a child's education makes a positive difference, and that father involvement during infancy and early childhood also contributes to a child's emotional security and enhances problem-solving in math and verbal skills.

In fact, one study showed that the chances of a child getting mostly A's increased by over 40 percent in two-parent families where the father was highly involved. Even in families where the father isn't living with his child but remains actively involved, those odds of getting A's increased by a full third.

Clearly, fathers matter when it comes to early childhood development and education. And

while there is now a growing understanding of that fact, it was Vice President Al Gore who put a national spotlight on this issue during his 1994 Family Re-Union Conference, and he's worked tirelessly on it ever since.

Our combined efforts are paying off. I'm pleased to release a report today from the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services that offers educators and early childhood providers information, strategies, and tools to successfully involve more fathers in their children's learning—from encouraging more fathers to read with their kids at home to inviting more of them to volunteer in schools and child care centers.

The report highlights model programs around the country and provides resource information for practitioners. We also know that noncustodial parents who continue to be involved with their children are more likely to pay child support. The sad fact is that one in three children in America today lives without his or her father. They shouldn't be punished, either emotionally or financially, because of that. That's why for 7½ years now we've made child support enforcement a top priority.

And today we've got some further evidence that our efforts are paying off. Child support collections increased 10 percent during the past year, reaching a record of nearly \$16 billion. That's double what it was in 1992. This means fewer women on welfare, fewer children in poverty, more families living in dignity.

When it comes to protecting children and building strong families and strong communities, all of us have a role to play. But first and foremost, it's about caring mothers and fathers and then about supporting community. But Government also must do its part. And we mustn't

forget that most fathers out there really do want to do a good job. That's why today I'm also directing a number of departments to develop coordinated, interagency guidance to help States and communities identify and use available Federal resources and opportunities for promoting responsible fatherhood.

The research and the results are clear: Supporting responsible fatherhood is good for children, good for families, good for our Nation. It's why we propose building on our progress with a \$255 million responsible fatherhood initiative called "Fathers Work/ Families Win." The fact is, many fathers can't provide financial and emotional support to their children, not because they're deadbeat but because they're dead-broke.

Our initiative would help at least 40,000 more low income fathers work and support their children. Unfortunately, in the spending bill passed in the House this week, the Congress turned its back on this challenge by not including any

money for this important initiative. So I ask Congress to work with me across party lines to pass a budget that makes sure more fathers can live up to their responsibility. Working together, we can help fathers better fulfill the emotional, educational, and financial needs of their children.

As we prepare to celebrate the first Father's Day of the new century, let's do all we can to help more fathers live up to that title, not just through their financial support but also by becoming more active, loving participants in their children's lives.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 11:15 a.m. on June 16 in Classroom 230 at Joseph C. Lanzetta School (Public School 96) in New York City for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on June 17. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 16 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Statement on the Anniversary of the Geneva Protocol of 1925 *June 17, 2000*

Seventy-five years ago today, June 17, 1925, the international community took a major step toward protecting the world from the dangers of weapons of mass destruction by concluding the Geneva Protocol of 1925. In the aftermath of the terrible casualties caused by poison gas in World War I, the Geneva Protocol banned the use in war of chemical and biological weapons.

More recently, the international community has worked to build on this achievement. The 1972 Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) banned the development, production, and possession of biological and toxin weapons, and the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) did the same for chemical weapons. Today, 135 countries are parties to the CWC, and 143 are parties to the BWC. The United States has ratified both agreements, and our commitment to them has enjoyed strong bipartisan support.

Today, one of the greatest threats to American and global security is the danger that adversary nations or terrorist groups will obtain and use chemical or biological weapons. The inter-

national agreements we have reached banning these weapons are a critical component of our effort to protect against this threat.

In my 1998 State of the Union Address, I called on the international community to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention with a new international inspection system to help detect and deter cheating. Significant progress has been made in Geneva at the Ad Hoc Group of BWC States Parties toward achieving this goal. We urge all participants in this process to work toward the earliest possible conclusion of a BWC Protocol that will further strengthen international security.

On this 75th anniversary of the Geneva Protocol, I call on the countries of the world who have not yet done so to join the Geneva Protocol, CWC, and BWC. I call on all parties to strictly adhere to these agreements and to work to strengthen them. It is more urgent than ever that, true to the words of the Geneva Protocol, their prohibitions "shall be universally accepted . . . binding alike the conscience and the practice of nations."